

The Celebration of New Ministry for the Reverend Faun Harriman
St David and St Paul, Powell River – Monday, October 24th at 2.30pm

In coming to Powell River for this occasion today the first thing I wanted to see (aside from Faun that is) was the wonderful carving by Ivan Rosypsky of the Heiltsuk first nation which stands in the grounds of this Church in the Sycamore Commons Permaculture Garden project. This carving (as many of you will know) includes images of the sun (a symbol of life-giving warm and growth), as well as the Eagle (sky), the Killer Whale (sea), the Bear (earth and forest) and five salmon (sustenance and provision) representing the different species of salmon found in the Pacific waters. In the centre of the carving is a brick from St Michael's Residential School, Alert Bay; both Ivan's mother and aunt are survivors of the school. The brick is a visual metaphor of 'interruption', as the Residential Schools had 'interrupted' the flow of First Nation's culture and community in Canada.

The article that covered the dedication of this carving (just over a year ago) appeared in the December 2015 edition of our diocesan newspaper TOPIC. What struck me in the photo of the carving was the people gathered around it are all smiling. It has to be said that is not always true in photos in the TOPIC. But here was a picture of the carver, Ivan and others who had worked together from the church and First Nations to build community and move forward together in partnership.

It is a very potent symbol of how all our work in the church should happen; through invitation, through mutual respect, through learning and sharing. The church often speaks about seeking reconciliation with First Nations people and here in Powell River you have worked together to move forward together and the smile on those faces in the photograph demonstrates the joy and mutual respect that came from this partnership.

So I am delighted to be in Powell River to speak at the Bishop's invitation to celebrate this new ministry, this new partnership between the people of this parish and their new priest. Actually she isn't that new as she arrived a few weeks ago but this is the formal beginning of her ministry as she is licensed by the Bishop and welcomed by her colleagues and the local communities.

It is not my purpose today to tell you all about Faun. First of all she has been with you for almost two months so you have an idea already. Secondly Faun is quite

capable of telling you all about herself; she doesn't need any help from me. That said, she is someone with a real heart for the Anglican Church of Canada and parish ministry. She is also a very loyal person who yet speaks the truth as she sees it. Faun is a little on the extrovert side but still listens and is so wise in her counsel. I'm also told that Faun is very partial to carrot cake, curry and cheeseburgers, and no I cannot reveal my source.

For me, ministry is fundamentally what people do together. It only works - ministry only thrives when everyone works together to make things happen. Clergy and lay people can inhibit ministry if they don't work together but when both parties cooperate wonderful things happen.

So today is a very exciting new chapter in the life of this parish, for its people and for its new priest. It is the formal beginning of working together on mission and ministry.

In the church we often think we live in difficult times that resources (people and money) are limited. So frequently we overlook the abundance God has provided for our parishes. In our parish we seek to have as many people as possible offering ministry in terms of their gifts, experience and time. Two members of our Pastoral Care team are in their mid-80 and I have told them they may not retire yet. Sure they don't run around to visit people in the hospital, but they can still phone, e-mail or speak to people in Church. So perhaps we should spend more time looking at the wonderful resources we have and the gifts that people possess, rather than worrying because we don't have this or that or the next thing.

When I looked at the options for the sets of readings today I decided not to use the gospel passage about the healing of the crippled women. I thought it might be open to confusion given the surgery the vicar designate had over the previous two summers.

So instead we are looking at the other set which take us elsewhere.

It is a constant source of encouragement to me to read the Acts of the Apostles and the letters of the New Testament. They remind us that controversy and disagreement was not something that the Anglican Church invented during the last 20 years.

We should also remember that the Anglican Church itself was born out of conflict between an English king and the Pope in the 16th century.

I do confess to be being surprised to hear in the first reading that *'The whole assembly kept silence'* because that is not the usual way to describe an Anglican congregation in 2016. That said in the Acts of the Apostles the assembly were listening to Barnabas and Paul speaking of all the signs and wonders they had done through them amongst the Gentiles. Too often in the Church we do not listen for good news and don't share the good news that is happening amongst us. That is why the carving outside this church is so important and made the front page of the TOPIC because here is a vitally important project where the Anglican Church was working in partnership with Ivan to create this wonderful and significant pole which stands as a symbol of the determination in Powell River to work together and move forward in relationship. It also incidentally, demonstrates that you can be involved in church work and still smile.

I speak of course as someone quite incapable of looking other than an utter buffoon who cannot smile to save his life as soon as a camera is pointed in my direction. And if you don't believe me check out the photos of this service when they appear on the Facebook page in the next couple of days.

In the gospel passage Jesus taught in the synagogue to the amazement of those who were gathered there. Jesus was remembered as Mary and the carpenter's son. In his home town those gathered knew him to be the brother of James, Joseph, Simon and Judas, not forgetting his unnamed sisters. Jesus wasn't popular in this role and he states: *Prophets are not without honour except in their country and in their own house.* And we are told Jesus did not perform many deeds of power because of the unbelief of the people.

Faun we know we won't see you so often now in Vancouver as we have in times past but remember you and this parish remain much in our thoughts and prayers as you minister together in this community. How important you all are is evidenced by those who have made the journey from other places in the Diocese to be with you, to pray with you and celebrate with you and the parish this Monday afternoon.

We commit to pray for you all in your ministry in Powell River as we know you pray for our Diocese, our Bishop and the parishes all the way from here to Hope.

As you begin this ministry together in a few moments, we ask that God will bless all your work of mission and ministry together.